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A-G[rinnell,
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Tourists
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BIRD TOURISTS OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

BY ELIZABETH AND JOSEPH GRINNELL.

Authors of "Our Feathered Friends."

OUR newspapers frequently note the "flocking" of tourists to Southern California—the human wanderers who come with each revolving season eager to stow away as much as they can of our climate and our fruit; but seldom mention the birds, those faithfully returning visitants who pay us liberally for board and lodging, throwing in a series of entertainments well worth our while.

They are "deadheads," these bird tourists, to whom invisible aerial railroads have issued free passes, which often include whole families or townships, so that when they arrive they take us by storm, as many of us as are prepared for them. Those who are not prepared for them may never even see them or hear their voices. It is well to prepare the eye and ear for these varied travelers, that we may recognize them at sight,



C. M. Davis Eng. Co.

THE ROBIN—FROM LIFE.

These illustrations from photographs of living wild birds—caught, photographed and let fly again—are unique. So successful portraits of our feathered friends have never been made before; they are a great aid to identification.—Ed.



C. M. Davis Eng. Co.

WAX-WING—FROM LIFE.

call them by name, and be able to give them such hospitality as we may. They are "people," all of them, with tastes and preferences, and even critical tendencies.

Of our many tourist birds the robin is dearest to every heart. "Ho, you have the robin here!" is the frequent exclamation of many a stranger on whose sandals, or patent leathers, our dust is clinging in a first embrace. Yes, we have the robin here, but as a visitor only. He is a great traveler. Every returning year sees him staying with us a little later, and we hope some day to find the familiar nest of mud and sticks in the forks of our live-oaks and mottled sycamores. But alas, this hope may be in vain, for we are cementing our reservoirs and no mud exists on their dry banks. Should we see

to the matter of leaving a little pool in the back end of the lot in the adobe berry-patch, these red-breasts might take the hint. They leave us with reluctance, and last year a few old bachelors remained with us all summer, a trifle out of sorts, we fancied, with their condition. There is no need of describing the robin; after long effort we succeeded in photographing him. His dear picture is in every heart. He is also in the heart of the sharp-shinned hawk. We shot one of these little desperadoes the other day just as its talons buried themselves in the breast of the sweetest robin in the garden. And so the hawk, scarcely larger than its prey, was deprived of its sweet morsel. These hawks are said to be so fond of the robins that they follow them about.

Usually (and especially in a wet winter) the robins and the wax-wings (cedar bird) appear together. It is they who strip our pepper trees of their pendant pearls, swallowing the berries whole, with a good deal of flattering comment, as if they were making poetry, like the tourist preachers and other folk. They disgorge the hard seeds of the center at random, and with ceaseless rapidity. One can hear the patter of the



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GOLDEN CROWNED WARBLER—FROM LIFE.



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AUDUBON'S WARBLER—FROM LIFE.

light hail on the roof, or the side-walk, or the hard ground anywhere, and looking up see no cloud. The thin, sweet pulp under the red skin of the berry is the only edible part, and meal-time seems never to end. We induce these tourists to remain in our grounds a little longer than elsewhere by saving up a few bushels of the pepper clusters, after the first autumn wind, for their banqueting after they have stripped the trees. Now these spicy berries may serve as a sort of spring alternative to these robins and wax-wings. This may prove a point worthy of notice by our local physicians. It was by noting the fondness of the bobolink for the poke-berry, or *phytolacca*, that a famous "anti-fat" remedy was discovered. The bobolink, fattened into the "butter-bird" by high living in the grain fields and the rice swamps, betook himself to the poke-berry and thereby reduced his adipose tissue. But he knew better than to poison himself by too big a dose.

Perhaps the wax-wing is the most beautiful of our tourists in color and form. The difference between the sexes of this bird (as of the robin) is in the shading of tints only. Both male and female possess the "sealing-wax" tips to the wing and tail feathers. Of what use these are, save as ornament, cannot be conjectured. The crest, which the bird lifts when curious or happy, and depresses when frightened or cross, is peculiar, and a wonder to all admirers. The crest of the wax-wing makes him as conspicuous a tourist as the traveler from Philadelphia, who wears his stove-pipe hat on the streets of Los Angeles, well nigh losing it over backward in his attempts to peer into the blossoming top of a blue gum.

Aububon's warbler is another of our tourists. The upper parts are bluish ash streaked with black. A spot of yellow is on the crown, the rump, the throat, and each side of the breast. The belly and under tail-coverts are white. The grey wings have a white edging, and the whole length of the bird is about five and a half inches. It breeds northward and in Alpine regions. Its note is very sweet and not intrusive.

The intermediate sparrow comes early and stays late. We see them in large flocks. They love to stay about the stables and chicken houses to feed on the grains. Nothing so good as cookies for them, if one will take the trouble to give them crumbs. They will fly away with a large piece and thank you as they fly. They and the towhees are great friends and may be seen together around the woodpile and the bamboo bunches, whirring away with a great noise if disturbed, but returing immediately. Their song is very sweet, the bird sometimes twittering between mouthfuls as it picks up the cracked corn, with the hens. They will perch on the edge of the bran-pail while the cream-colored Jersey takes her lunch, and pick the bits from her face. They may be recognized by

their striped head and wings and sparrow-like form. They make a fine photograph. Our Alaskan travelers noticed this bird, and the robin, in regions beyond the arctic circle last year.

Among other tourists are the golden-crowned warbler, the ruby-crowned kinglet, or little king, and the varied thrush. The hermit thrush is another, always a solitary individual, as if disgusted with what it has seen of the world, or love-sick, or a possible poet. Probably the latter. This hermit is rufous brown, shading to yellowish underneath. There are dusky spots on the sides of the neck, and around the eye is a yellow-



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INTERMEDIATE SPARROW—FROM LIFE.

ish orbital ring. This last renders the hermit easy of identification as he hops among the orange trees.

There is the red-shafted flicker who hammers away at the house gables until everybody is awake in the morning, and then darts off with a sheen of the rising sun under his wings. And there too is the red-breasted sapsucker, running up the pepper trunks or backing down the same thoroughfare, red, and black, and white, as gay a young fellow as there is in all our land. He takes care to keep on the opposite side of the tree if you are near, where he amuses himself by pecking holes in the bark. He then flies off, to wait until the sap dries,

when he will return to peck it out in a round white globule of sticky wax.

Besides these mentioned, there are many other tourist birds, each as welcome as the other. To induce them to feel at home in one's grounds one must see that too much spray is not used on the foliage, that the trees and shrubbery are mostly of natural growth, little clipped, with swaying branches and hidden nooks. That people move about softly, sweet of tone, and harmonious of character. That there are no cats about, and that plenty of food is placed in tempting display. As a usual thing, compact, precise, hotel grounds are not sought by the birds. Birds love to "see out," with plenty of wing space and listening room. If one would become familiar to the birds one must form the habit of sitting or standing stock-still. Birds notice movement more than form. But who ever saw Southern Californians sitting or standing stock-still? Well, one can make-believe stand still, and see what there is to see. It may be a butterfly sitting down on his haunches like a dog. Or it may be a cotillion of airy flies dancing on nothing. Or it may be a rufous hummer talking love to his mate while she naps on a blade of pampas grass.

Pasadena, Cal.

IN WESTERN LETTERS.

BY CHAS. F. LUMMIS.



It requires no serious strain of the imagination to foresee a very near time when California shall be either the steady home or the ready refuge of a large proportion of American writers and artists. Not that a few present swallows make a summer, but because summer draws the swallows. People of brains do not know very much; but the attraction of gravitation works upon them as well as upon those who do not know *anything*. And when they come to realize its pull they are apt to yield a little more gracefully and gratefully. Though the temptation is strong to their vanity and their pockets alike to leave Nature (whence their strength cometh) and sleep on the steps of the market-place, they are learning—by slow stages, as all good things are learned, and by degrees of the most teachable among them, as all learning advances—how much better to live in and to work in and to rest in California is than New York. And if there is anything in evolution, or anything in common sense, the day is not far distant when the Athens of America will be as far from Boston as it can get—without wading. With fair luck, I expect to live to see it; with good luck, to see it in the age of Pericles.

* * *

If we of the real West have to stammer a little about the geography of Chicago, there are times when we feel no embarrassment about receiving her into our map. It is a delicate question, and a complicated one, whether Chicago is West or East; and it is to be analyzed by neither provincial. She is Eastern enough to play the Eastern cities their own fool game; she is Western enough to beat them at it—and beat them

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